GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:198
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2017
Passports through Post Offices
Kodikunnil Shri Suresh;Reddy,Kotha Prabhakar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has finalised the methodology to issue passports through post offices and if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(b) the details of funds and infrastructure required/allocated for the project;

(c) the details of hurdles being faced in implementation of the aforesaid project; and

(d) whether a centralised system for issue of passports is being introduced and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 198 REGARDING "PASSPORTS THROUGH POST OFFICES" FOR ANSWER ON 15.03.2017

(a) Yes. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Department of Posts (DOP) have decided to utilize the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the various States as Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) for delivering passport related services to the citizens of the country. The pilot projects for this joint venture between MEA and DOP was inaugurated on 25 January, 2017 at the Post Offices at Mysuru in Karnataka and at Dahod in Gujarat. The POPSK at these two places have been running successfully since their inauguration. With the successful operationalization of these two pilot projects, the Government has now decided to scale up this programme by opening 64 more POPSKs, as per the list attached at Annexure.

Out of the 64 POPSK at Annexure, ten POPSKs at Asansol, Kavaratti, Kota, Muzaffarpur, Pathanamthitta, Raiganj, Rourkela, Salem, Udhampur and Vidisha have since been inaugurated taking the total number of POPSKs as on date to twelve.

The POPSK would be functioning like the other existing Passport Seva Kendra (PSK). The process of issuing passports will not change after the opening of the POPSK. Applicants, who apply for their passports online through the passport portal, can now schedule an appointment and then visit the designated POPSK to complete the formalities similar to those at the PSK necessary prior to the issue of the passport. The photographs, biometrics and the supporting documents would be electronically captured at the POPSK and the applicant will not have to revisit the POPSK prior to the issue of the Passport.

(b) The Department of Posts would provide the space necessary for the setting up of the POPSK in the Post Offices. MEA would provide the IT infrastructure and Non-IT equipment including furniture and furnishings, WAN Bandwidth (primary and backup link) and Local Area Network necessary to operationalize the POPSK. The estimated cost for setting up a POPSK for processing approximately 100 applications per day would be as follow:

Particulars Amount
(Rs. Lakhs)
Non-recurring: 30.00
Recurring per month: 4.00

Funds would be made available in the budget of the CPV Division and the budget of the Passport Offices under whose jurisdiction the POPSK are to be set-up for setting up the POPSK.

(c) The difficulty in the setting-up of the POPSK is the shortage of personnel in the Central Passport Organisation (CPO), particularly those at the Superintendent and Senior Superintendent levels who function as Passport Granting Officers (PGO). There is also shortage of Assistant Superintendents (AS), Senior Passport Assistants (SPA), Junior Passport Assistants (JPA) who function as the

Verification Officers (VO). DOP have expressed their willingness to deploy personnel to serve as Verification Officer (VO) and Granting Officer (GO) for passports at the POPSK. These personnel would have to be, however, trained before they start functioning as VO and GO.

(d) The Passport Seva Project, currently being used, is a centralized system for issue of passports. The Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) would be connected to the PSP centralized system for processing of applications submitted at POPSK. The printing and dispatch of the Passports for applications, which are received at POPSK, will be carried out at the Regional Passport Office (RPO) under whose jurisdiction the POPSK would function.